

History of the parks and public grounds of St. Paul /

HISTORY OF THE PARKS AND PUBLIC GROUNDS OF ST. PAUL.*

* Read at the monthly meeting of the Executive Council, March 10, 1913.

BY LLOYD PEABODY.

Of the few whose prophetic vision in the early years of the history of this city swept over our river bluffs and alternating hills and valleys and saw there, ready to our fashioning, a combined park system unequaled in its setting, Joseph A. Wheelock was easily first. It is not claimed, here, that he was the first in point of time to dream of great things for the future, but that, summing up the things he sought to bring about, and comparing them with the actual achievement, there is no other man who can be placed beside him as a founder of our parks.

The Pioneer Press, which became great under his hand, was always a power for the advancement of the interests of the city in the domain of parks. Identified as he was, from the very earliest efforts in that direction, with the movement for the acquisition of parks, his interest and his work never flagged. We are informed by those who knew him most intimately that for the last ten years of his life fully half of his time was given to work for the parks. Before his active connection with the Park Board there was no park system. His imagination saw, and his mind devised, the system of parks and boulevards for St. Paul as they are today. His energy and perseverance brought to a conclusion many of the most important of the separate features of the system.

Mr. Wheelock spent the most of what to other men would have been leisure time in going about the city and its environs, in company with his most effective and sympathetic co-worker, Mr. Nussbaumer, Superintendent of Parks. Day after day and month after month, almost without rest so far as holidays were concerned, they went over the proposed

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system, planning an 39 610 area here, a connecting boulevard there, and perfecting and bringing into symmetry as a whole that remarkable series of natural intervals and spaces which we now know as our park system.

The Old System; Public Squares .

The classification of our park areas, with reference to the original purpose back of their institution as such areas, falls readily into two classes, the old and the new.

The park areas belonging to the old system were really not of a system at all. They were merely a haphazard lot of open spaces, which had come to the possession of the city in all sorts of ways, and with no common nor ordered purpose on the part of the donors, when they were donated, nor of the authorities of the city in the cases when the areas were acquired by purchase or condemnation. These areas had no relation to each other, nor to any general plan.

It is not intended by any means to detract either from the merit of the various donors of those old park plots, or from their utility and even beauty. Many of them, as will be noted later, lend dignity to their surroundings, are quite fit and adequate as park spaces in their respective localities, and are justly considered as monuments to the men whose generosity preserved them to public use. The point here made simply is that the park areas of St. Paul, as a unified system, were never dreamed of, certainly never effectively, until the dreams of Joseph A. Wheelock, and of those who worked with him and after him, came true.

The greater number of the old areas are most fitly defined as public squares, having some utility as connective ways between neighboring streets, and which in closely built up portions of the city give distinction to the surrounding architecture.

COURT HOUSE SQUARE.

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The first of these squares, in point of relative importance, is the Court House Square, on which the present Court House stands. This was donated to the County of Ramsey by Vital Guerin, in 1850. Later, in 1876, his widow, Adele Guerin, gave a quitclaim deed of the property to the county in consideration 611 of the sum of one thousand dollars; and in 1892 the County deeded a half to the City. The location of this square, which was perhaps originally nearly accidental, proved to be a most fortunate one, situated, as it is, between Fourth and Fifth streets on Wabasha, on one edge of the business district proper, yet in a quite central location with respect to all parts of the city.

RICE PARK.

Next in importance of these public squares is Rice Park. If it were not for the use made of the Court House Square, this park should be placed first in the list. Located, as it is, between Fourth and Fifth streets, with St. Peter street on the east, it has already become the center of a series of public and semi-public edifices of noble design and architecture, which buildings would lack a large share of their present effectiveness, from an artistic standpoint, in the absence of an open space for a proper setting. With the United States Building on the northerly side, the new Public Library on the south, made possible largely through the munificence of James J. Hill, and the Wilder Charity Building on the west, there are few similar areas in any city which so well serve the purpose for which they were originally devoted as does Rice Park.

The ground, 1.60 acres, was donated to the city by the owners and platters of that and the surrounding property, former United States Senator Henry M. Rice, and his associate, John R. Irvine. The donation was made May 16, 1849. It is interesting to note that there never was any formal dedication of this square to public uses. On the plat of Rice and Irvine's Addition, the ground is designated as "Public Square." The only approach to a dedication appearing on the plat are the words, "...that the map hereto attached is a correct map..." etc. The filing of such a map, however, followed by the taking possession

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by the public, constitutes a sufficient transfer of the interest of the donors to the city (which continued as a village until five years after the date of the plat).

IRVINE PARK.

This park or square is noticed next in order, not because of its relative importance, but on account of the fact that it passed 612 to the city at the same time and in the same way as Rice Park, just described. It is located at the intersection of Franklin and Walnut streets, in the West Seventh street district. By itself, this park of 3.58 acres is a dignified and sightly square, but the development of the city has left it with no distinctive surroundings. It is of value as a breathing space and a neighborhood park, but it cannot be given any higher rating as an institution of public utility or beauty. It is a part of the land platted with Rice Park in Rice and Irvine's Addition. The area here, also, is simply indicated on the plat as "Public Square." The names of these two parks were bestowed in recognition of the generosity of the donors respectively.

SMITH PARK.

This square of 2.03 acres, lying between Fifth and Sixth and Sibley and Wacouta streets, should be ranked third among this class of spaces in the city. It affords some slight utility as a connective way for pedestrians, but is chiefly useful as affording one of those open spaces which add so much to the sightliness of a city, especially in a congested district such as is the one in St. Paul where it is located, and which add greatly to the artistic merit of the surrounding architecture, as already pointed out.

This square was acquired by the city at the time of the plat of Whitney and Smith's Addition, in which it lies. The owners of the plat were Cornelius I. Whitney and Robert Smith. They were both non-residents. The name of the latter was assigned to this square, which on the plat appears merely as a space marked "10," as a block number in a series

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of blocks. The dedication recites that the owners of the property “hereby convey the public square to the public,” etc.

The ground was originally a high hill of drift gravel and boulders, some sixty feet above the surrounding land, and has been graded down to its present level in the general improvement of the district. The recorded plat bears date of July 24, 1849.

SUMMIT PARK.

This is a beautifully adorned square of .79 of an acre, lying at Summit and Nelson avenues. Half of it was donated to the 613 city by Bartlett Presley, and the other half was purchased at a cost of ten thousand dollars. It has been ornamented at a cost of \$2,104.57; and it is the site of the City Monument to the Soldiers of the Civil War. The plot was acquired in March, 1883. Although of small area, the outlook it affords over the business section of the city, and its adornment with a growth of large forest trees, make it one of the most important small parks in the city.

CENTRAL PARK.

Central Park, which contains 2.35 acres, occupies so commanding a position, with reference to possible future approaches to the State Capitol, that it possesses an importance which increases as time goes on. It lies just north of the junction of Minnesota street with Summit avenue.

The acquisition of this park presents one of the earliest instances of the citizens of St. Paul making an effort to improve the appearance of the city by increasing its open spaces. Mr. Frederick H. Warwick, a lithographic artist, drew a map of a proposed park designed to take in the ground which now constitutes Central Park. George H. Hazzard, now Superintendent of the State Park at Taylor's Falls, interested himself with John C. Quinby, Major John Espy, and others, in agitating the matter of acquiring the park and in procuring options on the property. Theodore L. Schurmeier, William Lindeke, W. R. Merriam, Uri L.

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Lamprey, William Dawson, and other well known men, were owners in the desired tract. Mr. Dawson purchased the interests of Mr. Merriam and Mr. Lamprey, and with others made a donation to the city of a good portion of the ground. The remainder of the tract was purchased by the city. The date of acquisition was November 15, 1884.

LAFAYETTE SQUARE.

This square was acquired by the city by purchase in the years 1884–86, at an initial cost of \$18,088.80; and it has been improved at a cost of \$1,513.80. The area is 1.01 acres. This ground has for many years served the purposes of a neighborhood park at Grove, Locust, Ninth and Willius streets, where it is situated. It seems likely that this square will pass into history by the encroachment from the surrounding territory of 614 business which cannot well accommodate itself to broken areas and spaces.

The New System of Parks .

It is perhaps not quite accurate historically to class our three principal landscape parks as belonging to the new system. What that system comprehends is set out more fully under the next following subdivision of "Parkways and Boulevards." But it seems most appropriate to class them with the new, rather than with the old, for while the beginnings of Como Park, particularly, run back into the early history of the city, yet its development and that of the other two mentioned have been perfected under the new spirit which has brought our parks as a whole to their present standard.

COMO PARK.

No history of the parks of St. Paul would be well balanced which did not give large space to Como Park. This conclusion is established by several considerations. Its history runs back well toward the beginning of the city, as above pointed out. Its area, 319.34 acres of land, 107.75 of water, having thus a total of 427.09 acres, gives an expanse devoted to landscape gardening quite commensurate with the present development and wealth of St.

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Paul. Its individual beauty, regardless of comparisons with other like parks, is too manifest for discussion. Finally, its location affords a sort of nucleus from which run out several parkways, uniting this most important park with the entire system.

The history of this park begins with an act of the Legislature of Minnesota approved February 29, 1872, by which the Judge of the District Court in Ramsey County was required to appoint five commissioners, whose duty it should be to contract for and purchase not less than five hundred, nor more than six hundred and fifty, acres of land within a convenient distance of the city of St. Paul, but "beyond the present limits thereof," for a public park. A bond issue was provided, to an amount not exceeding \$100,000, for the purchase of the tract to be selected by the commissioners. In 1873 the act was amended in some particulars, and pursuant to the act Judge 615 Westcott Wilkin appointed, as commissioners, General H. H. Sibley, Joseph A. Wheelock, Samuel Calhoun, William Pitt Murray, and J. C. Burbank.

The City Council took the necessary steps for the issuance of the bonds, the lands of the first portion acquired were selected at Lake Como and put under contract, and the details of perfecting the transfers from the various owners were put under way. Meanwhile opposition sprang up in several quarters, and it finally spread till it appeared to involve nearly all the best citizenship of St. Paul. The first active opposition appears to have taken shape in the City Council.

In the St. Paul Dispatch for July 2, 1873, on page 2, appears the following report of the proceedings of the Common Council of St. Paul:

A communication was received from the parties owning the real estate purchased for the public park, notifying the council that they were ready to perfect title to the land as soon as the city should execute the necessary bonds for the purpose....Alderman Fisher moved the reconsideration of the resolution by which the Council had directed the purchase of the property at Lake Como for park purposes. In support of the resolution he read a long

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speech, and concluded with an appeal to the Council not to make laws in favor of the rich who could “ride in chaises,” and against the poor who could not afford to indulge in such articles.

Alderman Louis Krieger made some remarks in support of the resolution, in which he referred to those who had “parks on the brain,” to “oppression of the poor,” etc. The motion to reconsider was lost.

The speech of Alderman J. W. Fisher in support of his resolution appears in the St. Paul Dispatch for July 3, 1873, and refers to the acreage of the park as 257 acres, and to the bond issue as being \$392,000.

In the Dispatch for February 18, 1874, appears the record of the proceedings of the Common Council at which Alderman Krieger introduced a resolution in the following language:

Whereas , The City Council of the city of St. Paul did purchase a public park at and near Lake Como, and whereas the voice of the people is apparently opposed to the city holding said land for such purpose.

That the public debt of the city has thereby been increased beyond 616 the interests of the tax-payers, and at a time when they are least able to bear it.

That no publicly expressed voice of the people demanded said purchase; that the public interest demands that said lands be sold and the proceeds placed in the city treasury to pay the principal and interest of said department incurred thereby, if the same can be done by authority of law. Therefore

Resolved , That the subject of the power of the city to sell a part or the whole of said park lands be referred to the City Attorney for his legal opinion, as to the legal right of the city to

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sell lands or some part thereof, and [that he] send the same to the Council at the earliest day practicable.

The subject became a matter of general public concern and was taken up by the old Chamber of Commerce, a body older than, and quite distinct from, the present Commercial Club of St. Paul. Prior to formal action, the following petition was circulated and signed, and, with the names attached, was published in the Dispatch, which at that date had become the "Evening Dispatch," in the issue of April 4, 1874. The petition is as follows:

The Como Park. A Petition for Its Sale .

To the President and Common Council, City of St. Paul, Gentlemen :

The indebtedness of St. Paul is increasing at an alarming extent, and we the undersigned taxpayers would ask of your honorable body to sell the park property, provided it can be sold at cost, and reduce our liabilities. What we most need is sewerage, elevators, free bridge and good roads. We ask you as taxpayers that you so regulate the burden of taxation for the purpose of promoting the future prosperity of St. Paul, and not for the advancement of private interests of wild real estate speculators.

The petition bears the names of one hundred and forty-eight signers,—names, be it said, even today, of the highest honor in St. Paul. At least twenty-five of the names are those of men who are universally known and respected today. For obvious reasons the publication of the list of these names is forborne. These men represented the best blood of St. Paul at that time. But the citizens were oppressed by business reverses brought on by the "panic of '73," referred to in the Chamber of Commerce meeting stated more in detail below. The city was then small, with a population of only about 30,000. 617 The park project was a very ambitious one for a new city, whose citizens were struggling with the financial depression that was then world-wide.

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Further, the final action of the Chamber of Commerce on this matter appears to indicate that the sober second thought of the men of St. Paul was sound, and that the petition was born of fears to which they had only temporarily yielded. Two days after the publication of the petition there was published in the Dispatch for April 6, an account of the consideration of the petition at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. The account states that William L. Banning spoke in support of the petition, and in the course of his remarks reiterated some prior statements made by him that the park when completed would have cost three million dollars. Pennock Pusey spoke in favor of retaining the park, and in the course of his remarks said:

It was though, and I think wisely thought, that we should profit by the errors and omissions of other cities, and take timely steps to secure one of the many sightly and characteristic spots for which our landscape is noted, before the complications arising from the erection of expensive private improvements should render the undertaking difficult and costly.... I submit that the failure of Jay Cooke & Co. and the resulting monetary scare, matters of temporary concern, things of today, from the effects of which we are already rapidly recovering, are scarcely a sufficient cause for the abandonment of all provision for an expanding future.

It is of interest to note, in passing, that Mr. Pusey in his address charges Mr. Banning with saying that no parks would be needed until after the passage of fifty years, when St. Paul should have attained a population of two hundred thousand. We shall not complete this fifty year period till 1924.

The matter was laid over for a week, and in the issue of the Dispatch for April 13, 1874, it is chronicled that the petition was indefinitely postponed, with but one dissenting vote. The name of the dissenting member is not given, but we may easily guess it.

At the time of the presentation and consideration of these trouble-borrowing resolutions, there was in progress a conclusive demonstration of the wisdom, from a business

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standpoint 618 alone, of the purchase of the park lands, and as well the fairness of the purchase price, commercially considered. This appears in an editorial in the Dispatch in the issue for April 7, 1874. It is there stated that the real estate firm of Col. D. A. Robertson & Son proposed to purchase Como Park, except a hundred acres to be retained by the city, the purchase to be effected by guaranteeing the payment of the bonds which were issued to secure the park lands, so that the 100 acres would cost the city nothing. The editorial goes on to state that this proposition will go far toward convincing the most skeptical that the purchase of Como Park was a judicious investment.

The work of shaping the wooded area and utilizing the expanse of water included in the original purchase, and in later acquisitions for Como Park, has fallen to the Superintendent of Parks, Frederick Nussbaumer, who has held his present position continuously since his appointment in 1892, It is but scant justice to say that the work could not have been put in better hands. Mr. Nussbaumer has combined native taste and a capacity to grow with his work, with executive ability of the sort which has enabled the Park Board over many years, and with the successive changes in its personnel, to leave in his hands to a large degree the purely business part of the administration of this and the other parks of the city. Whatever of individual service the future may bring to the city of St. Paul, Como will remain as a testimonial to the native genius and energy of Superintendent Nussbaumer.

It has unfortunately become true that Lake Como, the native setting around which the park has been built, is with difficulty maintained at a satisfactory level of the water. Powerful pumps were installed several years ago, and during the past winter of 1912–13 have been worked continuously day and night. The superintendent reports that even with this constant supply the level at which the water stood in October, 1912, has been but little more than maintained. It is thought that the location of sewers in the vicinity has operated to drain off and thus divert from the lake a considerable amount of surface water which originally found its way thither; and also that the work of improving the lake has disturbed its natural bed 619 of impervious soil to such an extent that a partial drainage from the lake itself has been set up by that means. It is the intention of the superintendent to seek

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a remedy for the latter condition, which, if his theory be correct, is susceptible of being rectified.

In the improvement of the park, the shores of Lake Como have been dredged out to make a more uniform and deeper stage of water near the shores, the lagoon northwest of the lake has been improved by dredging, and a waterway has been opened from it into the lake proper. Besides containing in large numbers the native plants and flowers of the state, the park now supports, through the ingenuity of Mr. Nussbaumer, not less than twenty species which were formerly exotic to the state.

It is interesting to compare the prophecies made at the time when the first land for Como Park was acquired, with what has actually come to pass. The total cost of Como Park to date for land is \$141,880.61, and for improvements \$465,545.19; in total \$607,425.80. This is nearly \$2,400,000 less than the three millions which Mr. Banning in 1874 prophesied it would cost.

Another light that failed was Alderman Fisher. The rich do go to Como "in their chaises," propelled now by gasoline; but it is a safe hazard, judging from what one may observe at Como every summer, that there are at least fifty poor people and those of the middle class financially who patronize Como, to one who goes there in an automobile or carriage.

PHALEN PARK.

This park in its main extent is of comparatively recent acquisition, and, leaving the water out of consideration, is second to Como in size, containing 239.14 acres of land. There are 222.04 acres of water, making a total area of 461.18 acres, thus somewhat exceeding Como in total area. The land was all acquired by the city by condemnation proceedings, dating from the year 1894 onward. The latest acquisition was May 19, 1906. The park takes its name from Lake Phalen which forms a part of it, and which, with the neighboring hillocks and valleys to the south and west, well timbered with native oak, forms so 620

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attractive an expanse of natural landscape that its acquisition as a park for the city was almost a foregone conclusion.

Lake Phalen and its outflowing creek were named for Edward Phelan (whose name was variously spelled), one of whose successive land claims, in the earliest years of St. Paul, was on this creek. He sold the claim to William Dugas, who in 1844–45 built a sawmill on the creek and intended also to make it partly a grist mill, this being the first mill in St. Paul.

Though Phalen Park is somewhat remote at the present time, yet in view of its inherent fitness as a landscape park and its location on the line of the boulevards destined to encircle St. Paul as more fully set out further on, it is of inestimable value to the city.

INDIAN MOUNDS PARK.

For this park St. Paul is indebted to the persistence and energy of Joseph A. Wheelock. Efforts for its acquisition had been under way for some time before the accomplishment of the project. The land was obtained under condemnation proceedings, but in most cases the prices fixed for the respective pieces of land taken were the result of compromise, after almost endless negotiations between Mr. Wheelock and the various owners. The tract was acquired at different times from the year 1893 onward. The area at present is 46.33 acres. The land cost \$126,426.71, and the improvements \$44,101.92; total, \$170,528.63.

The price seems somewhat large for the amount of land which was secured, but in gauging the value of the tract it must be borne in mind that in its main feature, that is, the outlook both up and down the long sweep of the Mississippi river, from the point where the Minnesota enters it, at Fort Snelling, past this city, and far away to the south, Mounds Park is entirely beyond comparison. It is doubtful if there is anywhere in any city so impressive a combination of views, where nearly the whole of the business section of a great city, so imposing an expanse of river, with a vast sweep of country lying beyond, can all be taken in at a single viewpoint. That particular spot was known and appreciated by our red brothers 621 long before any white man came elbowing his way in. Doctor Neill, in his

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History of Minnesota, sets out the account by Jonathan Carver of the observation by the latter of the burial place of the Indians, which is now so prominent a feature in the park, and from which the park takes its name. Carver's account, which dates from what he saw in the year 1766, is as follows:

At a little distance from this dreary cavern [now known as Carver's cave and which he had just been describing] is the burying-place of several bands of the Naudowessie [Sioux] Indians. Though these people have no fixed residence, living in tents, and abiding but a few months on one spot, yet they always bring the bones of their dead to this place.

HARRIET ISLAND.

While there was some opposition of a rather negative sort to the taking over by the city of Harriet Island, yet no voice has ever been raised to claim that this unique bit of nature donated to the city by the generosity of Dr. Justus Ohage, was destined for the use of the rich. No act of greater beneficence has ever been performed toward the city or its people than that of Dr. Ohage in acquiring and donating the island in the channel of the Mississippi known as Harriet Island. That name has long been borne by the bit of land in the river opposite the upper portion of the business section of the city, and it was bestowed in honor of Miss Harriet E. Bishop, who came to St. Paul as a teacher in the year 1847. The land was originally but an enlarged sand bar in the river. Nature had, however, clothed it with an abundant growth of trees, and while Dr. Ohage was Health Commissioner of St. Paul he conceived the project of acquiring and improving the island and turning it into a park and public baths for the use of the people of the city generally. He accordingly acquired the property and donated it to the city by deed dated May 26, 1900, recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds in Book 442, page 439. The area of the island is 28.13 acres, much of which is made ground. The original surface was a series of undulating bars composed of sand and silt, which have been brought to something like a uniform level, the outer edges of the island being raised by hydraulic dredging from the channel, and these newly-built areas being sown to grass.

The native trees have served for most of the adorning necessary in that direction. Nearly all the trees of the island were overturned by the tornado of August 20, 1904, but were quickly restored to their original position where not too badly broken, and there is now so little trace of what then seemed like an irreparable calamity, that the fact that such an event had occurred would not now be suspected by any visitor to the island.

The bath houses have been constructed on the northerly side of the island, with ample dressing rooms for boys and men, and a separate room for women. These, with the outdoor games instituted on the island and the small zoo maintained there, are sufficient attractions to keep the island fairly thronged with visitors, especially in the evenings and on holidays, throughout the summer months. It seems most appropriate to mention in this connection the approach to Harriet Island, which belongs to the park system of the city and leads from the southerly end of the Wabasha street bridge to the bridge connecting Harriet Island with the mainland. This approach was acquired by purchase at a cost of \$3,500 for the land and \$918.03 for improvements; total, \$4,418.03.

LINWOOD PARK.

This park is of smaller area than the older landscape parks, but is located in a rapidly growing quarter of the city, and on this account it will no doubt be of increasing importance from year to year. It is at Victoria and St. Clair streets, and is of recent acquisition. It was taken by condemnation proceedings under date of March 18, 1909. The cost of the land was \$22,420.37, of improvements \$9,135.47; total, \$31,555.84. The area is 15.50 acres.

Parkways and Boulevards .

In dealing with the parkways and boulevards of the city it seems fit to pause and take account of those grand features of natural topography on which our new park system is based; for, as intimated in the foregoing subdivisions of this paper, the present system is

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not the result of haphazard, but has been carefully thought out and elaborated, from a plan presented 623 by nature itself. The following out of this naturally graven path has led to a development which has been of parkways and boulevards, rather than of landscape parks. A glance at the map of the natural physical features of St. Paul and its environs shows that the Mississippi river sweeps about the city in a semi-circle, running from the city limits of Minneapolis on the west to the point where the river turns southeastward at Indian Mounds Park. Passing over the map with the eye from Indian Mounds Park northward and then westward, it is observed that Lake Phalen and Lake Como lie in the northerly half of the great circle of which the river makes the southerly portion. This, then, was the great natural parkway which presented itself to the vision of Joseph A. Wheelock. At the time he took up his work, because the depth and precipitous slope of the river gorge did not permit any ordinary utilization of the land, the desired areas lay to a great extent unspoiled and ready for fitting into a comprehensive and unified system.

This is what is known to those concerned in the development of the parks as the "Outer Circle." Far too much of it has been marred by the hand of man. Much of it remains to be acquired. But so well awakened have the citizens of St. Paul become to the power of parks and parkways to draw to their vicinity commercial values, and, it is to be hoped, so appreciative have they become to the purely artistic value of these open spaces and ways, that there is little fear that any support which is necessary in the future for the carrying out of those portions of the plan yet in embryo will be withheld.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOULEVARD.

The key to this grand parkway, and individually a most impressive portion of it is the Mississippi River Boulevard. This consists, topographically, of the crest and slope of the eastern side of the Mississippi gorge from the Minneapolis city limits, just north of the Town and Country Club, to West Seventh street at the Fort Snelling bridge. The length of this boulevard is 3.51 miles.

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The acquisition of this expanse of ground has effected the preservation, it is to be hoped for all time, of a long stretch 624 of our great river in the same condition that it appeared to Father Hennepin and Jonathan Carver on their first explorations of the valley. From the north end of the boulevard to a point near the Government high dam, at the Soldiers' Home, the entire gorge, as well as the woodland upon the level bench above it, are practically in a state of primitive nature. The dense woods, in which are represented nearly all our native hardwood trees, with a fringe of red cedars along the bluff and a sprinkling of the white pine, here west of its main geographic range, stand for the most part unspoiled by the ax.

Although the improvement has drawn to the adjacent platted land large values, the territory up to the present is practically unoccupied. North of Marshall avenue the improvements of the Town and Country Club front for a considerable distance on the boulevard. South of Marshall avenue and near to it, a few fine residences have been built fronting on the boulevard, and the grounds of the St. Paul Seminary run down to the boulevard just south of Shadow Falls Park. Aside from these improvements, the ground along the boulevard is practically unoccupied to a point far south of the Government high dam.

The driveway proper has been completely improved throughout its length. All necessary bridges, culverts, and drains, have been put in, and the way surfaced with crushed rock with a crude oil dressing, and it is probably the best patronized automobile drive in the city.

The lands for this improvement were acquired at different times, by condemnation and purchase, beginning December 16, 1901, and the last acquisition was dated September 18, 1907. The total area is 130.54 acres, and in this connection it should be noted that not all, but a portion only, of the slopes of the gorge have been acquired by the city. The cost of the land was \$33,818.94, of improvements \$93,414.64; total, \$127,233.58.

WHEELLOCK PARKWAY.

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Separated from the Mississippi River Boulevard by a stretch of territory to be covered by a projected parkway not yet perfected, is Wheelock Parkway, which extends from Como Park 625 to Phalen Park, and which is one of the boldest and best conceived projects in our entire system. It is here characterized as bold, for the reason that it has been pushed through a territory from which no immediately local support for such a project could be expected, and because it could never have been conceived save as a part of the entire plan of encircling the city with a continuous parkway. With its length of 4.27 miles, its setting among the rolling highlands in the north portion of the city, and its terminal points resting on our two most important landscape parks, it is an entirely fit and worthy memorial to the founder of our park system, whose name it bears. The land for this parkway was acquired by condemnation under date of December 10, 1909. The cost of the land was \$15,128.88, and improvements, \$44,482.90; total, \$59,611.78.

LEXINGTON PARKWAY.

Lexington Parkway is one of the best known in the city because of its location in a neighborhood where building improvements are already becoming somewhat congested, and where local values are high from the superior character of the building improvements. This avenue, with its length of 2.48 miles, running from Summit avenue north to McKenty street, close to Lake Como, and with its impressive width augmented by an ample building line, lends a pronounced distinction to the district through which it runs, and confers values on the surrounding properties, both artistic and commercial, which can hardly be overestimated.

The land for the park was acquired by condemnation, after some failures and a long struggle which reached the courts. The cost of the land, taken under two separate improvements, was \$102,248.02, improvements \$32,717.22; total, \$134,965.24.

COMO AVENUE PARKWAY.

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This parkway is the long avenue connecting Como Park with the down-town district at Rice street, having its southeasterly terminal at the point last named. The land necessary for the widening of the streets on the line of this avenue was acquired by condemnation, under different improvements dating 40 626 from September 14, 1899, to June 14, 1906. The cost of the land was \$40,963.83, and of the improvements, \$7,733.64; total, \$48,697.47. The area of land taken is 7.37 acres.

COMO AVENUE BOULEVARD.

This boulevard is a portion of the parkway which is designed ultimately to link the Mississippi River Boulevard with the park at Como. It extends from the Mississippi river to St. Anthony avenue. The land taken was condemned under date of November 1, 1909. The cost of the land was \$15,415.00; its area, 5 acres.

CHEROKEE HEIGHTS AND THE WEST SIDE BOULEVARD.

These two improvements may be considered together, as they are separately acquired parts of one parkway, which has not, however, been completed up to this time. It is impossible to get a proper conception of this parkway without taking into consideration what is proposed to be done, as well as what has already been accomplished. The park authorities have long contemplated securing the crown of the Mississippi river bluff on the west or south side, from a point on the river near or at Mendota and thence eastward, taking in the entire slope and crown of the bluff to a point on South Wabasha street. A large share of this proposed parkway lies in Dakota county, and so is outside the immediate jurisdiction of the city. There exists, however, legislative authority for the acquisition of the necessary property for at least parkways, outside the city limits, which may be done as soon as there are funds available for the purpose, being authorized by Chapter 485 of the Laws of Minnesota for the year 1909.

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This great expanse of river scenery is for the most part still in a natural state, and it affords an imposing view westward up the main valley of the Mississippi, and thence farther west up the Minnesota river. It is a combined urban and country view, second only to that at Indian Mounds Park.

Cherokee Heights was the portion of the improvement first acquired. This tract comprises the open ground lying westerly from Ohio street along Cherokee avenue, and takes in a considerable 627 portion of the bluff slope. The High Bridge is the southwesterly terminus of this first section of the parkway under consideration. This section was acquired partly by gift from A. T. Rosen, now a member of the Park Board, and partly by purchase from other private owners. The date of acquisition was from 1903 to 1906. The land cost \$10,818.30, and the improvements, \$3,263.61; total, \$14,081.91. This includes, however, the market valuation of the portion donated by Mr. Rosen. The area is 9.37 acres.

The West Side Boulevard is the extension southwest, from Smith avenue to Baker street, of the parkway beginning as noted on Ohio street. This property was in form condemned, but was in fact the gift of James J. Hill, who furnished the entire amount of money necessary to acquire the property, \$13,000. The condemnation proceedings date June 10, 1906; and the area taken is 9.90 acres.

The ground takes in a considerable portion of the slope of the bluff and a strip of native woodland on level ground at the top of the bluff, which fortunate chance has spared from occupation by building improvements. The view from the top of the bluff near the southwestern or upstream end of this later addition to the West Side Parkway is a most commanding one, affording a vista both up and down the river, and spreading before the eye almost the entire business section of the city.

MIDWAY PARKWAY.

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This is a connective parkway, extending from Snelling avenue easterly to Hamline avenue. It was acquired by condemnation under date of June 17, 1901, at a cost of \$2,833.88 for the land, and the improvements have cost \$9,455.41; total, \$12,289.29. The area is 5.91 acres.

PLAYGROUNDS.

Several years ago, under appropriate legislation, there was created in St. Paul a body known as the Playgrounds Committee. This committee has in hand the work of selecting and looking after the development and care of small breathing spaces at various points in the city, which are designed principally as places where the children of the particular neighborhood 628 may gather and engage in games and sports. The grounds acquired are under the jurisdiction of the Park Board, and are by law classed as parks.

Streets under the Care of the Park Board .

There is a class of streets which are not properly designated as parkways, but which are ornamented and cared for under the direction of the Park Board. Most conspicuous of these is Summit avenue, which has the features of a parkway, and which is quite the most important connective boulevard running east and west through the city. In its width and ornamentation, it takes the character of a parkway at Lexington avenue. From this point it is 100 feet in width west to the Mississippi river, a distance of 2.63 miles.

There are other streets which are receiving the same sort of care from the Park Board as Summit avenue, but they are of less importance and a recital of them here would scarcely serve any purpose of this paper.

Parks and Parkways in Prospect .

A history of the parks and parkways in St. Paul would be incomplete which does not include, at least in narrative form, a statement of what is designed to be done in the future.

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A comparison of what is contemplated in the finished system as outlined above, with what has actually been finished by the acquisition of the necessary lands, shows that there are still large gaps to be filled in, spaces to be covered by future purchases or condemnation, and many details to be worked out, which will tax not only the industry of the future Commissioner of Parks, Playgrounds, and Public Buildings, but will as well be a draft on the resources of the taxpayers. The financial problem will for some time remain a serious one, but one which the people have repeatedly of late shown their willingness to face. The present Park Board is carrying forward, with such means as it is able to command, the work laid out in the time of Joseph A. Wheelock.

The city is fortunate in the fact that there is upon the board at this time a man who is able to bring to its various 629 problems a matured judgment in business affairs, large experience in executive work of the first order, and energy and capacity for new enterprises, which appear unabated in spite of the toll that the years have taken of him. This member is Alpheus B. Stickney. He has personally taken up, and is pressing forward with a zeal which is an indispensable prerequisite of success, the extension of the present finished work to that completed system which shall realize the hopes of the planners of the new system.

Mr. Stickney has taken up at this time the special project of connecting the River Boulevard with Indian Mounds Park, by a portion of the "Inner Circle," the main details of which are as follows.

The top of the river bluff all along the Mississippi River Boulevard consists of a practically level plateau, which lies substantially in the level of Fort Snelling. Eastward of the boulevard the land rises gradually into a second terrace, the crest of which is a gentle eminence opposite the Soldiers' Home, but which rises higher and higher as it passes to the south and east, until at a point near West Seventh street it consists of a high bluff, covered with an oak forest, and presenting a grand view west, south, and east, over the greater part of the river valley in the city limits.

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It is proposed by Mr. Stickney to run a boulevard from a point on the River Boulevard near the Soldiers' Home, easterly up to and around the brow of the highland just described, to the wooded bluff on Seventh street. There it is proposed to expand the parkway into a landscape park, to take in the timbered area. Thence the parkway will proceed by way of Linwood Park, Summit Avenue, and the State Capitol grounds and Capitol Heights, next crossing the railroad tracks by a viaduct, and continuing by Dayton's Bluff to Indian Mounds Park.

Mr. Stickney has also been active in the proposition to extend the parkway on the West Side from its present southwesterly limit to Mendota and Fort Snelling, and to take in, as landscape parks, the lowlands and islands between the fort and Harriet Island. This proposed parkway extension includes 630 the acquisition of lands along the river front from near Fort Snelling easterly to a point within the business district of the city.

There is a proposed extension of the West Side Boulevard easterly around the crest of the bluff along what is known as Prospect Terrace, and the construction of a new way along what will be made land in the river valley, if the harbor project ever comes into actual being. This new way is to connect with the general system at Indian Mounds.

Another project which only awaits adequate financing is an extension of Phalen Park to the south, and its connection with Indian Mounds Park by a parkway. This project is known as the Johnson Parkway, and is one which will certainly be effected in the near future.

It is proposed to connect Como Park at the northerly end with the Minneapolis system, by an appropriate way running west from Como to the city limits.

Another proposed parkway leads easterly and southerly from Mounds Park across Burlington Heights and into Washington county.

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The foregoing enumeration is not exhaustive of the subject of the proposed extension of our park system, but mentions those portions which are necessary to develop the new system into a well balanced whole.

The cost of the park system of St. Paul to the date of January 1, 1912, has consisted in acquisitions of land, \$780,541.80, and improvements, \$887,504.18; in total, \$1,668,045.98. The lands acquired amount to 1,006.04 acres; and the water areas, mostly of Lakes Como and Phalen, comprise 331.89 acres.